

Clinton Co. Sheriff's Office
1645 Davids Drive
Wilmington OH 45177

(937) 382-1611
Fax (937) 382-7530



Clinton Co. Jail
1645 Davids Drive
Wilmington OH 45177

(937) 383-4813
Fax (937) 383-0276

Ralph D. Fizer Jr. Sheriff

**Testimony for Congressional Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug
Policy and Human Resources**

Sheriff Ralph D. Fizer Jr.
Clinton County Sheriff's Office
Wilmington, Ohio

August 23, 2005
(held at Wilmington College)

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the invitation to testify before the Congressional Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources. I consider it an honor and a privilege to be able to speak to you and I want you to know we appreciate the fact that the Federal Government is willing to take the time to listen to our concerns on the local level.

From August of 2003 through August 15, 2005, there have been approximately 32 partial or working methamphetamine labs seized in Clinton County. All of these seizures resulted in felony arrests of approximately 50 individuals. There have been approximately 50 abandoned methamphetamine labs found in fields or ditch lines throughout the County. There are currently approximately 30 methamphetamine labs working in the County. The number of meth cooks grows rapidly, because it is relatively simple to make and the ingredients are easily attainable. Along with these meth labs, we have also had approximately 70-80 reports of anhydrous ammonia thefts in the County per year for the past two years. Our drug case breakdown is as follows:

Drug Cases in 2000:	92
Drug Cases in 2001:	105
Drug Cases in 2002:	80
Drug Cases in 2003:	101
Drug Cases in 2004:	106
Drug Cases to Date 2005:	88 (As of August 16, 2005)

Due to meth use in Clinton County, we have seen an increase in home burglaries and thefts. We have had several cases of burglaries while the home owner is home.

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All of these cases, the suspects were caught, then taken to the local hospital and found to be on methamphetamine at the time. Drug cases have impacted our correctional facility. Clinton County build a new Adult Detention Facility in 2001 with the expectations of it serving our needs for the next ten years. Due to the increase in drug crimes, we are currently overcrowded and in need of funding for additional detention space. This increase in drug cases also has affected our manpower as it takes many hours to work these cases along with the paperwork load but also affects the court dockets, prosecutors office and probation/parole offices. As a result of the increased felony case load on the court system, the possibility of a additional Common Pleas Court Judge is being explored.

As the Sheriff, my office has taken the initiative to warn and educate firefighters, township trustees and local citizens as to the dangers of meth labs. This has also been added to our DARE program to teach our children of the dangers of meth and the dangers of cooking it. Our Sheriff's Office also supports and participates in our local Coalition for a Drug Free Clinton County program. This organization also makes parents aware of the dangers of meth and has received a good response from our citizens.

We need our federal government to help us combat the meth lab abuse and trafficking. Some guidelines we feel might help would be for ALL stores and pharmacies to work with law enforcement to fight these drug abuses.

1. Federal legislature placing all cold medications with pseudoephedrine in the pharmacies. Require individuals to sign a log and present identification to make the purchase. Make the log accessible to law enforcement. Also, limit purchases of cold medications to two boxes.
2. We need more training available for local law enforcement. Training to certify officers in the clean up of meth labs.
3. We need more funding for equipment, manpower and training.
- 4.

Again, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening. We appreciate any and all support our Federal government can give us to help curtail the drug issues we face today. Should you need any further information from us, please feel free to contact me at the Clinton County Sheriff's Office